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REMARKS

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REMARKS,

¶c. ¶c.

WE appear to have reached that period of the war, in which the minds of all halt, as it were, to review the events that have already taken place, and to endeavour to establish, on the ground of probability, some final judgment concerning those which are yet to come. The contest has been conducted with unexampled firmness, and variable success, on all sides; the objects which each had in view, have been pursued with unparalleled exertion; and the actual result is, on the one hand, the prospect of an increase to the enemy's strength, by the defection and perfidy of the Court of Spain; on the other hand, the extinction of their commerce and naval consequence, by the valour of our fleets, and the overthrow of their late victorious armies in Germany, through the inflexible courage and constancy of our Austrian Ally.

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Whether the present crisis betokens the approach of peace; or whether, on the contrary, it is preparing for a more vigorous prosecution of hostilities: Whether, as in former wars with France, the struggle is eventually to terminate in a revival of friendship between the two nations; or whether the issue of the contest, like its origin and progress, will be essentially different from any thing that England has on former occasions experienced; is a question which ought powerfully to engage the thoughts and expectations of us all. And there cannot be a moment so suitable for considering the eventful alternative as the present, when the departure of a noble and distinguished negociator, sent on the part of Great Britain for the especial purpose of endeavouring to bring the war to a just conclusion, is on the eve of ascertaining this awful question, and of thus determining the fate, if not of England immediately, at least of many of the generations of manhood now living amongst us; to whose energies of body and mind the present and future interests of England will, in the event of a failure of success by negotiation, be, under Divine Providence, eventually consigned.

A crisis so extremely novel, and at the same time pregnant with such vast results, must naturally rouse the thoughts and sentiments of all who are able to awake, either to the importunity of interest, or to the authority of duty; and must render every sound-hearted
 Briton

Briton anxious to resolve those questions which his mind will urgently propose—What ought we to do on the ground of *interest* ?—What ought we to do on the ground of *duty* ?

It is of the most serious importance to the general result, that we should diligently use to the best purpose the very short interval of time that can elapse between the departure of the noble Lord, and the issue of his negociation. For, as the fate of the negociation may perhaps be nothing less than the fate of England; as the prosecution of a rancorous war against an enemy, fighting only to reduce the dignity, and to contract the commerce, of OUR EMPIRE, is an alternative for which we have no less to prepare ourselves, than for the more pleasing one of peace and tranquillity; as the moment of unsuccessful treaty will be that in which the enemy will call together all his energy, to strike the blow on the heart and source of our power, which he will then only have in purpose; and as the intervening period of time must at best be short; it requires no depth of political discernment, nor any refinement of philosophy, to perceive, that our interest and our duty call upon us to lose no moment of time, in disposing our minds, preparing our circumstances, and adapting our habits, for that event; in which the victory must inevitably be to him, who is earliest in force, in order, and in unanimity.

It is of little consequence, in this prospect of affairs, to enter upon the question of the original propriety of engaging in the war. If the few who professed to doubt of that propriety on party principles, and the still fewer who really doubted it on principles of policy, should still press their objections, we are at all times able to appeal to the great majority of the nation, both in and out of Parliament, whose distinct and unwavering judgment has long since ascertained the scale, in which reason and experience were laid.

Neither is it of any avail to the object, which our minds are now called, to dwell on the geographical successes of the enemy, as proof of our failure in the great purpose of the war. They whose imaginations are engrossed by material objects only, will urge the ill success of the campaigns of Flanders and Holland; the successive defection of the kings of Prussia and Spain from the Alliance; the eruption of the French into Italy, and our consequent exclusion from its ports; and they will infer, from this view of things, that the war has entirely miscarried as it affects England, and has been ruinous and destructive of all her interests. But, on the other hand, they, whose minds embrace a wider range of thought, far from forming their opinion of the merits of the war exclusively from territorial proportions, will carry back their recollection to its origin and occasion; they will consider, independently of all consequences, what it
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was our duty as a nation to do ; and, in making their estimates of its general character, of its profits and losses, they will consider it, not sparsely by relation to present convenience or inconvenience, or by its actual and temporary operation on the geographical boundaries of countries ; but in its relation to our permanency of happiness and existence ; to its lasting effect on the stability of society, on the consolidation of the necessary artificial force of government, and on the security of the civil and religious interests of the whole of Europe. They will assert, that if Holland, Flanders, and a part of Italy, have indeed been perverted by the diffusion of the revolutionary principles of France, WE at least have effectually prevented their operation in England : That if the established governments of some countries have been subverted, WE at least have guarded and secured our own : That if the progress of the French arms has experienced a temporary success, the progress of French doctrines has sustained an irrecoverable resistance :—That a battle or a negotiation is alone sufficient to restore the geographical limits of a country ; but that no effort of man, in the field, or in the cabinet, is able to restore the perverted morals of a nation, or to dissipate its errors. They will also see, that the unconquerable bravery of Austria, though it has not yet been able to recover Belgium, has nevertheless interrupted the progress of the revolutionary pestilence ; and, like the cordon it draws along its eastern frontier to obstruct the progress of the plague from
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from Turkey, it has defended the western frontier of Germany till the virulence of the contagion has abated, and it has thus gloriously secured the greater part of Europe in the possession of their religion, their laws, their liberty, and their property.

But these are subjects remotely, and not immediately, connected with the object before us, which is, to prepare our minds for the eventual issue of that negotiation, which we pray Almighty God, may terminate in the restoration of peace and prosperity to England, our Allies, and to the world, and in the re-establishment of such a system throughout Europe, as may confirm every power in the security of its rights; and once more render the whole (what the general interests of civilization, religion, and knowledge require), a large united society, seeking universal peace by the general equipoise of power, and not pursuing the aggrandizement of some parts, by the subjection and annihilation of others.

But the inscrutable judgments of Providence may not design us that speedy return to quiet for which we languish, but may still require the prolongation of those trials under which almost the whole of Christendom has laboured for upwards of four years. And the wild, untractable arrogance of France, not yet sufficiently reduced to render her capable of listening to the voice of reason and of justice, may obstinately persist in demanding such a price for
peace,

peace, as our interest and our duty can never allow us for an instant to give ear to. And this is the alternative for which it is of the extremest importance we should stand prepared. Whatever sacrifices Great Britain might be disposed to make to favour the return of peace;—whatever moderation she might be ready to display for obtaining that object;—yet, she cannot sacrifice, or hazard, that on which her *political existence* depends. And it is therefore highly necessary that we should all be apprised of the causes which sustain the political existence of Great Britain, that we may tenaciously hold and preserve those causes unimpaired, and be ~~how~~ sensible of the nature of the situation in which we should stand, were we called upon to defend them against the ferocious policy of a barbarous and vindictive enemy.

In endeavouring to obtain peace, we can have no other object in view than to enjoy those various gratifications, public and private, which war and its attendant circumstances withhold from us. These depend ultimately, on OUR EXISTENCE as a people, and on the RELATIONS and ADVANTAGES which as a people we have laboured, during a course of succeeding ages, to establish. When we compare the geographical extent of Great Britain with the weight she possesses in the scale of nations, we cannot but be forcibly struck by the disproportion. Many countries, whose territories are more than twice as extensive, exist in comparative insignificance and obscurity.

security. The political existence of Great Britain, therefore, bears no proportion to her geographical existence; and it follows, that her political consequence is not determined by the extent of her territorial dimensions. To what cause then are we to recur for the pre-eminence of this little island, which on every occasion approves itself to be the umpire of Europe, and whose weight is at all times alone sufficient to determine and restore the political balance? In what consists that power, which gives this high ascendancy to Great Britain?—It consists absolutely and entirely in her navy: in that superiority of naval strength and naval skill, which gives her the mastery over the seas, and thus in a manner advances even her geographical boundaries indefinitely over the surface of the ocean. If we suppose this naval strength reduced, Great Britain falls back at once to the puny dimensions of her island; her political existence becomes instantly pared down to the circumference of her soil; her pre-eminence sinks; and the whole of Europe becomes reduced under the grasp of the continental power, who should thus superadd to her territorial consequence that extent of naval domain, by the possession of which we are now able to keep Christendom in equipoise, and to preserve to every state its rights. In war, we have no apprehension of seeing our naval superiority diminished; it has risen from every trial in honours and in strength; by war, therefore, we cannot have a fear of receiving a wound in that part on which depends our consequence

quence and existence as a people. But what if the enemy should endeavour to do that by *treaty*, which they feel themselves unable to effect by *force*? What if they should artfully and plausibly urge the reduction of our naval strength as a condition of peace, and this on the insidious ground, that the preponderance of the navy of Great Britain disturbs that equality which should reign upon the seas? Shall we forget, that Great Britain, while she preponderates in naval strength, is on the other hand comparatively feeble in military force; that the general policy of Europe demands an equilibrium, not of naval force exclusively, but of naval and military power in the aggregate; that the military force of France, dangerous at all times to the independence of Europe, is counterbalanced only by the naval force of Great Britain; that before our late happy reduction of her navy, she threatened not only to exercise the mastery by land, but also to contest it on the seas; and that whenever she shall be able to accomplish this object, she will become invincible.

If then France, finding she cannot advance her navy above ours by all her exertions in war, should endeavour to reduce ours to the level she would desire, by negociation, and should insist on such a condition of peace, it will be manifest that the subscription to such an article would be the surrender of *our*

existence; and consequently that *our peace* cannot be attained through the operation of such negotiation.

Again; as our naval power determines our political proportions as a state, so is that power sustained and fed from the riches of our commerce. Was our commerce contracted, not only opulence and the objects of enjoyment for which alone peace can be desired, would be proportionably contracted at home, but our naval strength must be necessarily reduced, and our existence consequently endangered: while, on the other hand, whatever our commerce should lose, would be converted to the aggrandisement of the enemy. Our public *force* must ever depend on our public *resources*, and these must ever keep pace with the extent of our commerce. It is POSSIBLE that France, in order the better to accomplish the object of her heart, and to reduce us as a nation, may endeavour to abridge our commerce by depriving us of our principal markets; and that, possessed as she now is of the ports of Holland, Flanders, Spain, (perhaps Portugal) and part of Italy, she may endeavour to retain her influence over all these ports, in order to exclude Great Britain from the markets of Europe, thus to produce a revulsion in our trade, to shake our credit, to paralyze our manufactories, to lessen our resources, and ultimately to reduce our strength. But if France, pursuing a system of policy
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so nefarious, should stipulate for the retention of Flanders, in order to establish that union with Holland and that influence over her politics which it is ever essential to the interests of Great Britain, and of all Europe to resist; if she should render this dream of surfeited ambition, an indispensable term of peace. —What are we to do? Precluded from all direct intercourse with the internal affairs of Europe; separated from those powers who form together with Great Britain the natural guarantees of the peace of Europe against the arrogance of France; excluded from the whole western coast of Europe, and almost without a friendly port from the Elbe to the Tiber, we should, by acceding to a requisition so insolent and wild, not only break all faith with Austria, not only provide for our ultimate ruin by this unnatural and preposterous aggrandisement of France, but we should prepare our immediate present decay, by the reduction of that supply, which our actual political system constantly and unremittingly demands.

Since, then, we may consider it as *possible* that France, in the present state of her politics, should be sufficiently insane to require both or either of these terms as the condition of peace; especially after the examples she has lately exhibited to the world in her treaties with foreign powers; it is incumbent upon us manfully to anticipate this *possibility*, and vigorously

to prepare ourselves for its arrival. Whatever sacrifice (as we before observed) Great Britain might be disposed to make, whatever moderation she might be inclined to exercise, she cannot sacrifice her *political existence* ; which she would do in effect, if she acceded to either of the above proposals. And since it has been frequently and unequivocally declared, by those who have authority in the councils of France, that they esteem such objects indispensable for the security of their republic, it is most wise to dispose our minds at once for that alternative, and to use the intervening time of negotiation, in exciting that spirit which we must in the end call forth, if the enemy, fortified by Spain, should prosecute a war on principles so desperate. To meet the alternative of peace, requires no preparation of mind on our part ; it is, therefore, of comparatively small consequence to anticipate the terms by which peace may be obtained. But the alternative of war, and of such a war as a negotiation so terminated would prognosticate, calls for the whole store and energy of the national spirit, guided by an unwavering constancy, and by the most determined unanimity. Should such unhappily be the result of our endeavours to restore peace by *negociation*, we shall then be driven to the only remaining resource, that of compelling peace by *arms*. And, as the purpose of the enemy will be then reduced to the single point of lowering the eminence of Great Britain ; so, on the other hand, it will reduce the whole

whole object of the war with us to this distinct and momentous point,—the preservation of our **EXISTENCE, OUR INDEPENDENCE, and our POWER.**

And in such a contest, what is there that could divide us in sentiment, in determination, or in conduct? The venerable unanimity, which the opening of the present Parliament has displayed in respect of the event we here anticipate, may be taken for an hopeful presage of the conduct of the nation at large. If the negotiation for peace should fail, on the part of those who act on our behalf, through duplicity, or ambition, (which the high character of the noble Lord appointed to the mission forbids us to apprehend) the rulers of France will exonerate themselves of the odious charge of seeking to perpetuate the calamities of war, by publishing to the French nation and to the world the deceptive conduct of Great Britain. But if the negotiation should fail, through the exorbitant ambition and intractable insolence of France, the British Government will then remove from themselves the execrable imputation of seeking the prolongation of the war for personal views, by exposing to the public, to our Allies, and to Europe, the real cause of the inability that exists of re-establishing peace and tranquillity in Christendom.

In that event, *WAR must be inevitable*—and the ancient and modern honours of England will be
staked

staked for the issue. If we are remiss—inactive—timid—divided;—the enemy may assure himself of success: If we are forward—alert—undismayed—and united—if we call up the old spirit of our ancestors; if we convert ourselves into a martial people, and cast off the sluggish and inveterate habits derived from long luxury, security, and repose; we may meet the issue of the contest with confidence and composure; and anticipate the ultimate reduction of an enemy, rebellious to every principle of reason and justice, and an utter stranger to every scheme of civilization or peace. Nor in that event need we doubt, that the remaining powers of Europe will recognize their common enemy in the enemy of peace, when he shall once be distinctly exposed.

Instead then of passing the few days that are before us in soothing our minds with a pleasing phantom, destitute perhaps of any future existence;—instead of anticipating the very doubtful alternative of peace, and thus letting the period for preparation and exertion escape us; let us wholly turn our thoughts away from the view of peace, and suppose the interval of negotiation to be no other than a pause before the final appeal to arms. Let us familiarize our minds with every circumstance which that event can produce; let us conceive an enemy on our coast, in our interior; and let us suggest to ourselves the conduct incumbent on every one to pursue, were such an event at hand. Let us paint to our imaginations.

nations the very worst consequences of invasion, murder, rape, and devastation ; and let the picture, instead of stirring dismay within us, rouse up that sacred flame of patriotism and virtuous indignation, which shall startle and confound the enemy, and be at the same time the securest prognostic of our final triumph. Such a course of conduct, far from robbing us of any of the consolations which a returning peace brings with it, far from embarrassing its progress, or retarding its arrival, will afford a strong and efficient aid, to the progress of negotiation. Backed by a resolute, united, and professed declaration on our part to maintain the pre-eminence of our navy, and to protect the channels of our commerce as the vitals of our political existence, against every attempt, open or concealed, to impair them, our negotiators will be enabled to give to the French governors a proof of the certain failure of every negotiation in which such should be the terms required : While, on the other hand, it will prepare us, in the event of a failure, to display a triumphant evidence of our cordial and united purpose, to contribute our persons and our fortunes, to the last life and farthing, in defence of the existence, constitution, power, and commerce of OUR ILLUSTRIOUS COUNTRY, and in unrelaxing opposition to pretensions, so outrageous, so arrogant, and unjust.

THE END.

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